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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, show favor to our land and bless us with Your grace. Guide our lawmakers so that they will strive for complete honesty in their work for liberty.

Lord, empower them to give and not to count the cost, to strive and not to heed the wounds. Enable them to toil and not to seek rest, working for no reward except of knowing they are doing Your will. May each Senator strive to walk blameless, speak truth, and honor You.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 26, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Well, Mr. President, today is going to be a busy day on the floor of the Senate. Last week, I filed cloture on five of President Biden's nominees to serve as U.S. district judges, and today, we are going to begin working on these nominees.

Even as Senate Democrats proceed on our agenda to help working and middle-class families and tackle the climate crisis, we will not relent on speedily filling the vacancies in our Federal judiciary with qualified, mainstream, and diverse jurists.

Yesterday, we took a big step forward towards achieving that goal by confirming Myrna Perez to serve on the Second Circuit, one of the most important courts in the land, and the judges we will begin considering today continue that effort: more civil rights lawyers, more diverse candidates, more Federal defenders.

To date, the Senate has now confirmed 13 nominees to serve on our district courts, with 20 overall lifetime appointments to the Federal bench. Many of these individuals are knocking down longstanding barriers to the halls of justice: the first Native American judge, the first Muslim-American district judge. And among all of the President's nominees to date, over half—over half—are women. We are proud of that.

In a broader sense, President Biden's judicial nominees are also expanding and rewriting the rules of who merits consideration for the bench. Our Fed-

eral courts have long been presided over by former corporate lawyers and prosecutors and men. To be sure, many of these individuals have served admirably as judges, and I have been proud to support many of them over the years. But our Federal judges, more than ever—more than ever—are an essential component of our democracy, and they should better reflect the richness and diversity of our Nation—not just demographic and cultural diversity, as important as that is, but professional diversity, too.

We need more judges who know what it is like to defend people who normally can't afford attorneys. We need more judges who have fought for those who have faced discrimination in the workplace or because of the color of their skin. We need more judges who understand the economic hardship that so many people have and when they are forced to sign documents and other things that will hurt them economically. And we need judges who have been in the fight against these efforts—stronger than they have ever been, unfortunately—to undermine our democracy.

We need our Federal bench, in other words, to mirror our country as a whole. That is how we restore balance to the bench and strengthen people's trust in the Federal judiciary.

So, as a Democratic majority, we are going to keep working this week to make sure these nominees are confirmed by this Chamber. I hope both sides can work in good faith to move the process along quickly and in a bipartisan fashion.

BUILD BACK BETTER PLAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on Build Back Better, this week, Democrats are continuing to make important progress toward finalizing President Biden's Build Back Better plan, and we remain confident that a final deal is within reach.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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